

10/589609
IAP11 Rec'd PCT/PTO 16 AUG 2006

TRANSLATION

Massaging appliance

The invention relates to a massaging appliance according to the preamble of claim 1. Such massaging appliance for insertion into body cavities, e.g. the vagina, are known in the art (e.g. EP 0 472 965 A1).

The object of the present invention is to present a massaging appliance with an innovative effect. This object is achieved with a massaging appliance according to claim 1.

Further embodiments are the subject of the dependent claims. The invention is described in more detail below based on exemplary embodiments with reference to the drawings, wherein:

- Fig. 1 shows a massaging appliance according to the invention in side view, partially in longitudinal section;
- Fig. 2 and 3 show sections corresponding to the lines A-A and B-B of Figure 1;
- Fig. 4 shows a further possible embodiment of the invention in a depiction similar to Figure 1;
- Fig. 5 and 6 show sections corresponding to the lines A-A and B-B of Figure 4.

The massaging appliance generally designated 1 in Figure 1 consists of a support or, in the depicted embodiment, a plate-shaped base 2, on which a plurality of guide and support elements 3 are fastened, said elements extending in the longitudinal direction of the appliance 1 and protruding over one side of the base 2 and being rod-shaped in the depicted embodiment. The guide and support elements 3 provided at a distance from one another and oriented in the longitudinal direction of the appliance 1 form three groups, each with two guide and support elements in the depicted embodiment. The groups are offset from one another by 120° on the longitudinal axis of the appliance 1, so that the axes of the two guide and support elements 3 of each group are at the same radial distance from the longitudinal axis GL and are at a distance from each other.

A plurality of jaws or plates 4 are arranged on the guide and support elements 3. The jaws 4 in the depicted embodiment have a flat or graduated disk shape, so that three such jaws form one disk-shaped set of jaws. The jaws 4 or the sets of jaws formed by said jaws and

oriented with their surface sides perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the massaging appliance are provided consecutively in the manner of a stack in the longitudinal direction of the appliance 1 to form a jaw stack 5. Each jaw 4 is movably guided relative to the axis GL by means of oblong holes 4.1 on the two guide and support elements 3 of one support element group. The outer surfaces 4.2 of the jaws are designed in the depicted embodiment in the shape of a partial cylinder surface. The outer diameter of the layers formed by three jaws 4 changes along the axis GL, in the depicted embodiment such that the outer diameter of these layers is reduced on the end facing away from the base 2.

On the same axis with the axis GL, in the base 2 and between the jaws 4, one shaft 6 is rotatably mounted on bearings, said shaft having a non-circular cross section on its shaft section 6.1 located between the jaws 4, i.e. in the depicted embodiment a triangular cross section, which is twisted along the axis GL so that the extremities or corner points of said cross section lie on a helical line on the axis of the shaft 6. The jaws 4 bear with the inner bearing surfaces 4.3 against the shaft section 6.1. The base 2 and the jaw or plate arrangement 5 formed by the jaws 4 or jaw layers is covered with a shell 7 made of a rubber-elastic material, over which also the jaws 4 are pre-tensioned in a retracted position with the smaller distance from the axis GL.

The shaft 7 is driven by a drive unit not depicted, by means of which via the shaft section 6.1 a radial movement of the jaws 4, which with their bearing surfaces 4.3 work together with said shaft section, is achieved radially to the axis GL, so that the jaws 4, following the helical path of the corner areas of the cross section of the shaft section 6.1 along the longitudinal extension of the appliance 1 are moved varyingly radially outward at any point in time, thus resulting in a wave-like movement on the outer surface of the shell 7. This means that the phase of the stroke motion of the jaws 4 in the longitudinal direction GL changes, i.e. at any point in time some of the jaws 4 are in their retracted inner position, some of the jaws 4 are in the furthest radially outward position and some of the jaws 4 are in positions in between, as depicted in Figure 1.

Figures 4 – 6 show as a further possible embodiment a appliance 1a, which differs from the appliance 1 essentially in that instead of the radially moved jaws, several shafts 8 are provided, which are rotatably mounted in the base 2 and extend with shaft sections 8.1 over one side of the base 2. The shafts 8 oriented with their axis in the direction of the longitudinal axis GL of the appliance 1a are distributed at regular angle intervals on said longitudinal axis.

Furthermore, in the direction of the axis GL and at a distance from the base 2, support disks 9 are provided that are oriented with their surface sides perpendicular to the axis GL and are held on a support element 10 that is rod-shaped in the depicted embodiment and that is oriented on the same axis as the axis GL and is held at one end on the base 2. The support disks 9 form partially circular recesses or cutouts 9.1 on their periphery that are open toward the periphery and in which the shaft 8 is partially held with its shaft sections 8.1 and which form a support for the shaft sections 8.1.

The shaft sections 8.1 again have a non-circular cross section, i.e. in the depicted embodiment an oval cross section, which is twisted in the longitudinal direction of the shaft 8 so that the extremities of this cross section, i.e. the two outermost and most widely spaced areas of the oval cross section are each arranged on a helical line on the axis of the respective shaft 8.

In the depicted embodiment, a total of six shafts 8 are provided, offset, on the axis GL. The arrangement, formed by the shafts 8.1, the base 2 and the support elements or disks 9, of the shell 7, which is again made of the rubber-elastic material, is closed toward the outside. Furthermore, the design is such that when the shafts 8 are rotating, the shell 7 is also pressed elastically outward at the point where the cross section of the shaft sections 8.1 with the largest cross section axis is no longer tangential to an imaginary circular line around the axis GL. The least deformation of the shell 7 then exists at the point where the cross section of the respective shaft section 8.1 with its largest cross section axis is oriented tangentially to the imaginary circular arc around the axis GL (Figure 5), and the greatest deformation of the shell 7 exists at the point where the largest cross section axis is oriented radially to the axis GL (Figure 6). The shafts 8 can be driven by a common drive unit not depicted.

Plastic is an especially suitable material for the base 2, the guide and support elements 3, the jaws 4, the shafts 6 and 8, the support elements 9 and the support element 10.

All embodiments have in common the fact that within a rubber-elastic shell 7 forming the outer surface of the appliance, support elements are provided for said shell that are part of an actuating mechanism, with which a radial stroke motion is achieved on the outer surface of the shell, namely with a phase for the stroke motion that changes in the longitudinal and/or peripheral direction of the appliance.

The invention was described above based on exemplary embodiments. It goes without

saying that numerous modifications and variations are possible without abandoning the underlying inventive idea upon which the invention is based. For example, the support elements 9 can be eliminated. Furthermore, it was assumed in the embodiment in Figures 1 – 3 that the number of eccentric areas of the shaft 6 is equal to the number of support elements in each group or plane. Embodiments are also conceivable in which the number of eccentric areas is greater than the number of support elements in each group or plane.

Reference list

- 1, 1a massaging appliance
- 2 base
- 3 guide and support element
- 4 jaws
- 4.1 oblong hole
- 4.2 peripheral surface
- 4.3 bearing surface
- 5 jaw array
- 6 shaft
- 6.1 shaft section
- 7 shell
- 8 shaft
- 8.1 shaft sections
- 9 support or supporting plate
- 9.1 cutout or recess
- 10 support element